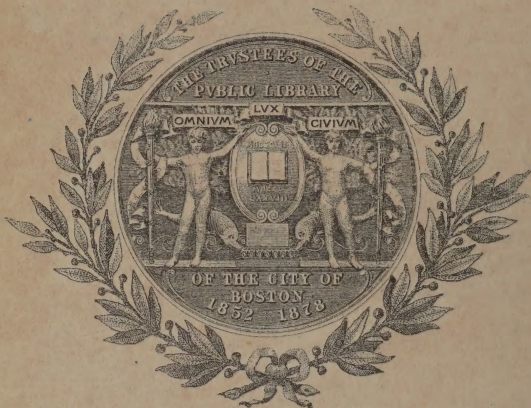
The image shows a close-up of a marbled paper pattern. The pattern consists of irregular, rounded shapes in shades of blue and grey, separated by thin, branching lines of red and white. The overall effect is dense and intricate. A small, light-colored rectangular label is attached to the bottom left corner of the paper.

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DEMOCRATIC OPINIONS ON SLAVERY!

1776-1863

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I. MODERN DEMOCRACY.

HON. GEORGE W. WOODWARD, Judge of the Supreme Court of Penn'a.

"And thus it happens that the providence of that Good Being who has watched over us from the beginning, and saved us from external foes, has so ordered our internal relations as to make Negro Slavery an incalculable blessing to us and to the people of Great Britain."

"We must arouse ourselves, and reassert the rights of the slaveholder, and add such guarantees to our Constitution as will protect his property from the spoliation of religious bigotry or persecution, or else we must give up our Constitution and Union. Events are placing the alternative plainly before us: *Constitutional Union and liberty according to American law, or else extinction of slave property, negro freedom, dissolution of the Union and anarchy and confusion.*—*Speech at Philadelphia, December 13, 1860.*

"His speech at the town meeting in Philadelphia, in December, 1860, has been vindicated by subsequent events as a signal exhibition of statesmanlike sagacity."—*Address of the Democratic State Central Committee, August, 1862.*

"We seek to give it the widest circulation, believing that no intelligent man, remembering where and why it was delivered will fail to see in it the wisdom and foresight of a statesman such as the Commonwealth now needs in the direction of its affairs."—*Preface to Judge Woodward's speech, as published by the Democratic State Central Committee, Sep. 10, 1863.*

RIGHT REVEREND JOHN HENRY HOPKINS, Bishop of Vermont.

Slavery, therefore, may be defined as servitude for life, *descending to the offspring*, and this kind of bondage appears to have existed as an established institution in all the ages of our world, by the universal evidence of history, whether sacred or profane.

This understood, I shall not oppose the prevalent idea that slavery is an evil in itself. A *physical* evil it may be, but this does not satisfy the judgment of its more zealous adversaries, since they contend that it is a *moral* evil, a positive *sin* to hold a human being in bondage, under any circumstances whatever, unless as a punishment inflicted on crime, for the safety of the community.

Here, therefore, lies the true aspect of the controversy; it is evident that it can only be settled by the Bible; for every Christian is bound

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to assent to the rule of the inspired Apostle, that "sin is the transgression of the law," namely, the law laid down in the scriptures, by the authority of God, the Supreme Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy." From his word there can be no appeal. No rebellion can be so atrocious in His sight as that which dares to rise against His government. No blasphemy can be more unpardonable than that which imputes sin or moral evil to the decrees of the eternal Judge, who is alone perfect in wisdom, in knowledge and in love.

"I proceed, accordingly, to the evidence of the same scriptures, which, long ago, produced complete conviction in my own mind, and must, as I regard it, be equally conclusive to every candid and sincere inquirer. * * *

And what contrast can be more manifest than this example of Christ on the one hand, and the loud and bitter denunciations of our anti-slavery preachers and politicians calling *themselves Christians* on the other? For they not only set themselves against the word of God, in this matter, condemning slavery as the 'monster sin,' the 'sum of all villanies,' but—strange to say—they do it in the very name of that Saviour whose whole line of conduct was the very opposite of their own.

"On the whole, indeed, I see no reason to deny the statement of our Southern friends that their slaves are the happiest laborers in the world. For every candid observer agrees that the negro is happier and better as a slave than as a freeman. And therefore, it is better for them to remain under the government of their masters, who are likely to provide for them so much more beneficially than they would provide for themselves."

These views have been adopted and endorsed by the Democratic party of Pennsylvania. The address from which they are extracted has been issued under the auspices of the Democratic State Central Committee, permission for that purpose having been solicited in an application under date of April 15, 1863, from the Hon. Charles J. Biddle, George M. Wharton, Peter McCall, and other leading Democrats, in which they say:

"Your views on the scriptural aspect of slavery, contained in a letter addressed by you to some gentlemen in New York, shortly before the breaking out of the war, has come to our notice and been perused with much satisfaction and profit. * * *

"Believing that the communication of your views as a Christian Bishop, on the scriptural aspect of slavery, may contribute to this desirable result, we respectfully venture to beg that you will favor us with them, and permit us to make them public."

ALEX. H. STEPHENS, Vice-President of the "Southern Confederacy."

"The prevailing ideas intertained by him (Jefferson) and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old constitution, were, that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally and politically. It was an evil they knew not well how to deal with; but the general opinion of the men of that day was, that, somehow or other in the order of Providence, the institution would be evanescent, and pass away.

"Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas. Its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, in his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth. This truth has been slow in the process of its development, like all other truths in the various departments of science. It has been so even amongst us. Many who hear me, perhaps, can recollect well that this truth was not generally admitted, even within their day."—*Speech at Savannah, March 21, 1861.*

WM. H. TRESPOTT, Assistant-Secretary of State under President Buchanan.

"That the institution (slavery) which, with the men of former times, was an experiment, had become the corner-stone of their social and political life." And yet there were some men in South Carolina "who would eradicate our old State pride—destroy the conservative character of our State politics—strip us bare of the glorious achievements of the past, and drive us, destitute and dishonored, into the fit companionship of a vagabond and demoralized Democracy."—*Address before the South Carolina Historical Society, 1859.*

Richmond Examiner, May 28, 1863.

"The establishment of the Confederacy is, verily, a distinct reaction against the whole course of the mistaken civilization of the age.
* * * For 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,' we have deliberately substituted Slavery, Subordination, and Government. * * * That there are slave races born to serve, master races born to govern. Such are the fundamental principles which we inherit from the ancient world, which are lifted up in the faces of a perverse generation that has forgotten the wisdom of its fathers; by those principles we live, and in their defence we have shown ourselves ready to die. Reverently we feel that our Confederacy is a God-sent missionary to the nations, with great truths to preach. We must speak them boldly, and whoso has ears to hear, let him hear."

II. THE FATHERS OF THE REPUBLIC.*

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

"I hope it will not be conceived from these observations that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people, who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say, that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see some plan adopted for the abolition of it."—*Letter to Robert Morris, April 12th, 1786.*

"I never mean, unless some particular circumstance should compel me to it, to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted by which slavery in this country may be abolished by law."—*Letter to John F. Mercier, September 9, 1786.*

"I wish from my soul that the Legislature of this State would see the policy of a gradual abolition of slavery, It might prevent much future mischief."—*Letter to Lawrence Lewis, 1797.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

"Slavery is such an atrocious debasement of human nature, that its very extirpation, if not performed with solicitous care, may sometimes open a source of serious evils."—*Address of Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the abolition of Slavery, signed by Benjamin Franklin, President, Nov. 9th, 1789.*

(FROM A MEMORIAL TO CONGRESS.)

"From a persuasion that equal liberty was originally the portion, and is still the birth-right, of all men; and influenced by the strong ties of humanity, and the principles of their institution, your memorialists conceive themselves bound to use all justifiable endeavors to loosen the bands of slavery, and promote a general enjoyment of the blessings of freedom. Under these impressions, they earnestly entreat your serious attention to the subject of slavery; that you will be pleased to countenance the restoration of liberty to those unhappy men, who alone, in this land of freedom, are degraded into perpetual bondage, and who, amidst the general joy of surrounding freemen, are groaning in servile subjection; that you will devise means for removing this inconsistency from the character of the American people; that you will promote mercy and justice towards this distressed race; and that you will step to the very verge of the power vested in you for discouraging every species of traffic in the persons of our fellow-men.

"BENJ. FRANKLIN, *President.*

"PHILADELPHIA, February 3, 1790."

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

The abolition of domestic slavery is the great object of desire in those Colonies, where it was, unhappily, introduced in their infant state. But, previous to the enfranchisement of the slaves we have, it

* The following extracts are compiled from the admirable "Historical Researches respecting the Opinion of the Founders of the Republic on Negroes, &c.," read before the Massachusetts Historical Society, August 14th, 1862, by George Livermore, Esq.

is necessary to exclude all further importations from Africa. Yet our repeated attempts to effect this by prohibitions, and by imposing duties which might amount to a prohibition, have been hitherto defeated by his Majesty's negative; thus preferring the immediate advantages of a few British corsairs to the lasting interests of the American States, and to the rights of human nature, deeply wounded by this infamous practice."—*A Summary View of the Rights of British America*, 1774.

"The whole commerce between master and slave is a perpetual exercise of the most boisterous passions; the most unremitting despotism on the one part, and degrading submissions, on the other. Our children see this, and learn to imitate it; for man is an imitative animal. The man must be a prodigy who can retain his manners and morals undepraved by such circumstances. And with what execration should the statesman be loaded, who, permitting one-half the citizens thus to trample on the rights of the other, transforms those into despots, and these into enemies; destroys the morals of the one part, and the *amor patriæ* of the other! For, if a slave can have a country in this world, it must be any other in preference to that in which he is born to live and labor for another; in which he must lock up the faculties of his nature, contribute as far as depends on his individual endeavors to the evanishment of the human race, or entail his own miserable condition on the endless generations proceeding from him. with the morals of the people, their industry also is destroyed. For in a warm climate, no man will labor for himself who can make another labor for him. This is so true, that, of the proprietors of slaves, a very small proportion indeed are ever seen to labor. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis,—a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of God?—that they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep for ever; that considering numbers, nature, and natural means only, a revolution of the wheel of fortune, an exchange of situation, is among possible events; that it may become probable by supernatural interference. The Almighty has no attribute which can take side with us in such a contest. But it is impossible to be temperate, and to pursue this subject through the various considerations of policy, of morals, of history, natural and civil. We must be contented to hope they will force their way into every one's mind. I think a change already perceptible, since the origin of the present revolution. The spirit of the master is abating,—that of the slave rising from the dust; his condition mollifying; the way, I hope, preparing under the auspices of Heaven, for a total emancipation; and that this is disposed, in the order of events, to be with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation."—*Notes on Virginia*, 1782.

"What a stupendous, what an incomprehensible machine is man, who can endure toil, famine, stripes, imprisonment, and death itself, in vindication of his own liberty, and, the next moment, be deaf to all those motives whose power supported him through his trial, and inflict on his fellow-men a bondage, one hour of which is fraught with

more misery than ages of that which he rose in rebellion to oppose ! But we must await with patience the workings of an overruling Providence, and hope that that is preparing the deliverance of these our suffering brethren. When the measure of their tears shall be full ; when their groans shall have involved heaven itself in darkness, — doubtless a God of justice will awaken to their distress, and by diffusing light and liberality among their oppressors, or, at length, by his exterminating thunder, manifest his attention to the things of this world, and that they are not left to the guidance of a blind fatality.’” — *Letter to M. de Meusnier, 1786.*

JOHN JAY,

Chief Justice of the United States, under George Washington.

“An excellent law might be made out of the Pennsylvania one for the gradual abolition of slavery. Till America comes into this measure, her prayers to Heaven for liberty will be impious. This is a strong expression, but it is just. Were I in your Legislature, I would prepare a bill for the purpose with great care ; and I would never cease moving it till it became a law, or I ceased to be a member. I believe God governs the world ; and I believe it to be a maxim in his as in our court, that those who ask for equity ought to do it.” — *Letter to Egbert Benson, 1780.*

CHRISTOPHER GADSDEN,

of South Carolina, Member of the Continental Congress.

“We are a very weak province, a rich growing one, and of as much importance to Great Britain as any upon the continent ; and great part of our weakness (though at the same time 'tis part of our riches) consists in having such a number of slaves amongst us ; and we find in our case, according to the general perceptible workings of Providence, where the crime most commonly though slowly, yet surely, draws a similar and suitable punishment, that slavery begets slavery. Jamaica and our West-India Islands demonstrate this observation, which I hope will not be our case now, whatever might have been the consequences had the fatal attempts been delayed a few years longer, when we had drank deeper of the Circean draught, and the measure of our iniquities were filled up.” — *Letter to F. S. Johnson, April 16th, 1766.*

HENRY LAURENS,

of South Carolina, President of the Continental Congress.

“You know, my dear son, I abhor slavery. I was born in a country where slavery had been established by British kings and parliaments, as well as by the laws of that country, ages before my existence. I found the Christian religion and slavery growing under the same authority and cultivation. I nevertheless disliked it. In former days there was no combating the prejudices of men supported by interest : the day, I hope, is approaching, when, from principles of gratitude as well as justice, every man will strive to be foremost in showing his readiness to comply with the golden rule. Not less than twenty thou-

sand pounds sterling would all my negroes produce, if sold at public auction to-morrow. I am not the man who enslaved them; they are indebted to Englishmen for that favor: nevertheless, I am devising means for manumitting many of them, and for cutting off the entail of slavery."—*Letter to his Son, August 14th, 1776.*

✓ **GOVERNEUR MORRIS**, of Pennsylvania, [To whom was entrusted the revision and final arrangement of the Constitution of the United States.]

"He never would concur in upholding domestic slavery. It was a nefarious institution. It was the curse of Heaven on the States where it prevailed. Compare the free regions of the Middle States, where a rich and noble cultivation marks the prosperity and happiness of the people, with the misery and poverty which overspread the barren wastes of Virginia, Maryland, and the other States having slaves."—*Debate in Constitutional Convention, August 8th, 1787.*

✓ **GEORGE MASON**, of Virginia.

(Delegate to the Constitutional Convention, 1787.)

"This infernal traffic originated in the avarice of British merchants. The British Government constantly checked the attempts of Virginia to put a stop to it. Slavery discourages arts and manufactures. The poor despise labor when performed by slaves. They prevent the emigration of whites, who really enrich and strengthen a country. *They produce the most pernicious effect on manners. Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant. They bring the judgment of Heaven on a country. As nations cannot be rewarded or punished in the next world, they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, Providence punishes national sins by national calamities.*—*Debate in Convention, August 22d, 1787.*

✓ **LUTHER MARTIN**, of Maryland.

(Delegate to the Constitutional Convention, 1787.)

"Now, when we scarcely had risen from our knees, from supplicating his aid and protection in forming our government over a free people,—a government formed pretendedly on the principles of liberty, and for its preservation,—in that government to have a provision not only putting it out of its power to restrain and prevent the slave-trade, but even encouraging that most infamous traffic by giving the States power and influence in the Union in proportion as they cruelly and wantonly sport with the rights of their fellow-creatures, ought to be considered as a solemn mockery of, and insult to, that God whose protection we had then implored; and could not fail to hold us up in detestation, and render us contemptible to every true friend of liberty in the world. It was said, it ought to be considered that national crimes can only be, and frequently are, punished in this world by national punishments; and that the continuance of the slave trade, and thus giving it a national sanction and encouragement, ought to be considered as justly exposing us to the displeasure and vengeance of Him who is equally Lord of all, and who views with equal eye the poor African slave and his American master."—*Address to the Legislature of Maryland, on the adoption of the Constitution.*

JOHN TYLER, of Virginia.

(Delegate to the Convention for ratifying the Constitution.)

“Mr. Tyler warmly enlarged on the impolicy, iniquity, and disgracefulness of this wicked traffic. He thought the reasons urged by gentlemen in defence of it were inconclusive and ill-founded. It was one cause of the complaints against British tyranny, that this trade was permitted. The Revolution had put a period to it; but now it was to be revived. He thought nothing could justify it. His earnest desire was, that it should be handed down to posterity that he had opposed this wicked clause.—*Debate in Convention, June 15th, 1788.*”

PATRICK HENRY, of Virginia.

Slavery is “as repugnant to humanity as it is inconsistent with the Bible and destructive to Liberty.”—*Letter to John Alsop, January 13th, 1773.*

“Slavery is detested; we feel its fatal effects; we deplore it with all the pity of humanity.”—*Debate in Virginia Convention on ratification of the Constitution.*

GOVERNOR EDMUND RANDOLPH, of Virginia.

(Delegate to the Constitutional Convention, 1787.)

“I hope that there is none here, who, considering the subject in the calm light of philosophy, will advance an objection dishonorable to Virginia,—that, at the moment they are securing the rights of their citizens, an objection is started that there is a spark of hope that those unfortunate men now held in bondage may, by the operation of the General Government, be made free.”—*Debate in Virginia ratification Convention.*

JAMES IREDELL, of North Carolina.

(Delegate to the North Carolina Convention on the Constitution.)

“For my part, were it practicable to put an end to the importation of slaves immediately, it would give me the greatest pleasure; for it certainly is a trade utterly inconsistent with the rights of humanity, and under which great cruelties have been exercised. *When the entire abolition of slavery takes place, it will be an event which must be pleasing to every generous mind and every friend of human nature; but we often wish for things which are not attainable. It was the wish of a great majority of the Convention to put an end to the trade immediately; but the States of South Carolina and Georgia would not agree to it.*”—*Debate in Convention, July, 1788.*



